



LEARNING & TEACHING NEWSLETTER

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Issue 1



Designed by:

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Teaching & Learning Team



FOREWARD

Greetings and warm regards

Welcome to the first edition of our Learning & Teaching Newsletter. This new initiative aims to shine a light on the rich, engaging, and innovative learning and teaching taking place every day in classrooms across Drogheda Educate Together Secondary School.

As we reflect on the past term, it's inspiring to see how teachers and students are embracing active, student-centred approaches that make learning meaningful and memorable. From hands-on model making in Science and real-world data investigations in Maths, to creative podcast production in Irish and sustainability-focused projects in both Business and Visual Art, it's clear that learning at DETSS is dynamic, collaborative, and deeply rooted in real-life contexts.

Across all subjects, students are developing key skills in problem-solving, communication, creativity, and critical thinking — skills that will serve them well both in school and beyond. Teachers continue to design learning experiences that challenge and support students in equal measure, encouraging curiosity, reflection, and confidence in their own ability to learn.

A sincere thank you to all colleagues who have contributed to this first edition by sharing the fantastic work happening in their classrooms. Your continued commitment to professional growth and collaboration ensures that the standard of learning and teaching at Drogheda ETSS remains innovative, inclusive, and student-centred.

Warm regards,

Ciara Campbell,
Learning & Teaching Coordinator



VISUAL ART

Visual Art - Emma Murray & Lisa Sherry:

It's been a busy and creative few weeks in the art rooms! Our 2nd Year students have begun their mask making project based on the theme of 'Things that go bump in the night', developing fantastic mind map pages full of ideas and inspiration. 3rd Years have kicked off their CBA2 with great enthusiasm and are off to a superb start. Transition Year students explored the theme of 'Sustainability' through imaginative mask-making while our 5th years got practical with Visual studies creating a 3D papier maché Tympanum. Finally, our 6th Years drew inspiration from their visual studies, practicing life drawing techniques influenced by the expressive works of Edgar Degas. A huge welcome to our 1st year Art students who kicked off their time in the art room with some Halloween inspired drawing work. We're very excited to see what you can produce during your time with us at Junior Cycle.



Students practicing their life drawing skills.



GAEILGE

TY Gaeilge - Megan Monerawela:

Podchraoladh sa rang Gaeilge!

Students of Rang Nairobi have taken foghlaim teanga to the next level by becoming podchraoltóirí óga! Over the past few weeks, they have been scripting their own podchraoltaí Gaeilge on topics that matter to them – ceol, spórt, nuacht an lae, bia agus faisean! This week they began recording and editing their podcasts. The podcasts will be available for everyone to hear very soon!



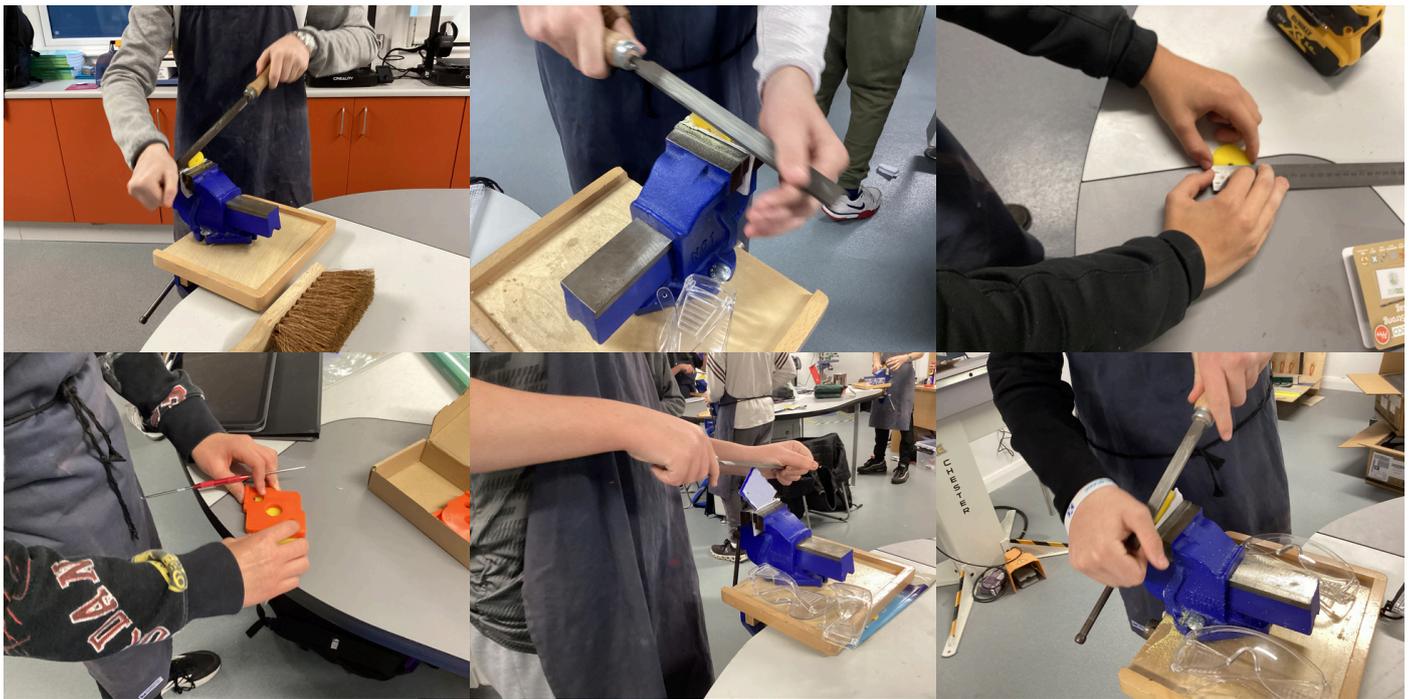
Students recording their podcasts as Gaeilge.



APPLIED TECHNOLOGY

Applied Technology - Aidan Shevlin:

Second Years in Applied Technology are busy bringing a motorised peg-and-slot idea to life. It is still a work in progress: parts are being marked out and shaped in acrylic using hacksaws; files; the pillar drill; and the strip heater. We are seeing tidier measuring and steadier tool control each week. There has been plenty of problem solving too: checking drawings; trialling fits; tweaking pieces when things are a bit off. Standards are high, bumps have been handled with good humour, and test assemblies are just around the corner.



Students using key skills to bring their peg-and-slot idea to life.



BUSINESS STUDIES

Business Studies - Grace Brosnan:

2nd year Business Studies students recently investigated renewable and non-renewable resources through a hands-on project. Each group picked a product (e.g. clothes, technology and coffee) and researched its materials, production, and distribution.

They considered whether resources were sustainable, if workers were treated fairly, and the environmental impact of transport and packaging. Students also explored how consumers can make responsible choices, such as supporting Fair Trade or sustainable brands.

The project helped our 2nd years understand the ethical and environmental impact of everyday products.



Students researching sustainability of common products.



HOME ECONOMICS

Home Economics - Ann Coyle & Eimear Condra:

Our Junior Cycle students have been showcasing an impressive array of culinary skills in their weekly cookery classes. From mastering knife skills and effective hob management to demonstrating excellent teamwork and strong awareness of health and safety, students are growing in confidence and competence each week.

Meanwhile our 2nd Years have also been turning their creative talents to interior design, producing detailed room plans and imaginative home design sketches. Take a look at some of their fantastic designs below.

Our Hotel, Catering & Tourism students have also been busy. They recently hosted a wonderful coffee morning for parents and teachers, displaying their impressive culinary and hospitality skills while creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. A very successful first term!



Students showcasing their culinary skills.



HISTORY

History - Eva McCaul:

Our first-year History students have been travelling back in time to explore the fascinating world of Ancient Rome. Through their study of Roman life including, busy Roman towns and grand villas to gladiator games and the strength of the Roman army, students have gained a real sense of what life was like in one of history's most influential civilizations.

A highlight of the topic has been the creation of recruitment posters encouraging citizens to "Join the Roman Army!". Using their imagination and historical knowledge, students brought Roman propaganda to life, showing their understanding of why people joined the army, what life was like for soldiers, and how the military shaped the empire's success.

Students have explored engaging themes such as daily life in Roman towns, the role of the army, entertainment and leisure, and Rome's enduring legacy. Classroom displays are now filled with colour, creativity, and curiosity which shows how history continues to inspire learning at Drogheda ETSS!



Students studying ancient Rome created posters using their historical knowledge and imagination.



ENGLISH

English - Rachel Flynn:

Salem, 1692 - Witchcraft, backstabbing, and accusations are flying. Our 6th year students put their powers of deduction to the test, as they pulled together to determine who amongst them was a witch. The guilty used their words to create diversions and shift the blame to protest their innocence. Students participated in a traitors style game, as an introductory lesson on 'The Crucible', by Arthur Miller. They mirrored the characters in the play in an attempt to gain sympathy for the characters. Justice prevailed however, and the witches were caught!



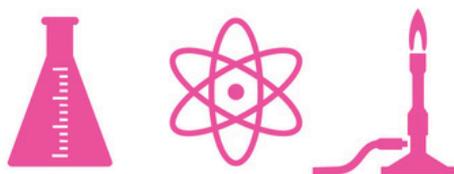
Students participated in a Traitors style game as an introductory lesson on 'The Crucible' by Arthur Miller.



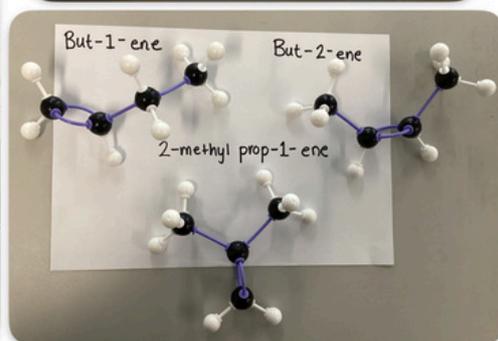
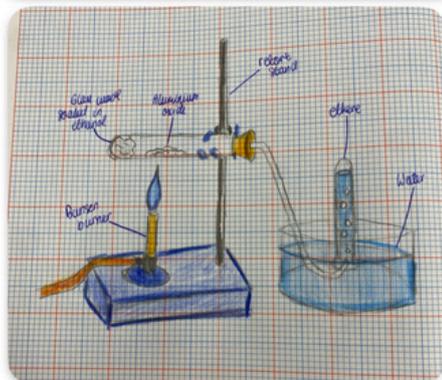
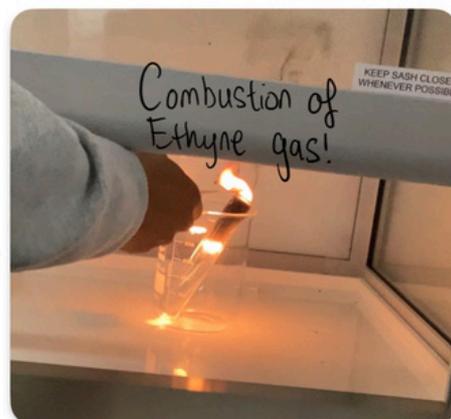
CHEMISTRY

Chemistry - Kayleigh Murray:

6th year chemistry students began 'Organic Chemistry' this term - a significant topic accounting for 40% of questions of their final written exam! This is the study of hydrocarbon compounds. Students learned about the Structural Isomers of the compound 'Butene', made models of these and named them using the IUPAC naming system. In two mandatory experiments they made the organic gases 'ethene' and 'ethyne' and tested their properties - including a very reactive combustion test on ethyne! Since open fire was used, and the gas products are highly flammable, health and safety measures were discussed and applied by students before taking part in the practicals. This required excellent teamwork, communication and practical skills.



6th Year Chemistry:
Organic Chemistry



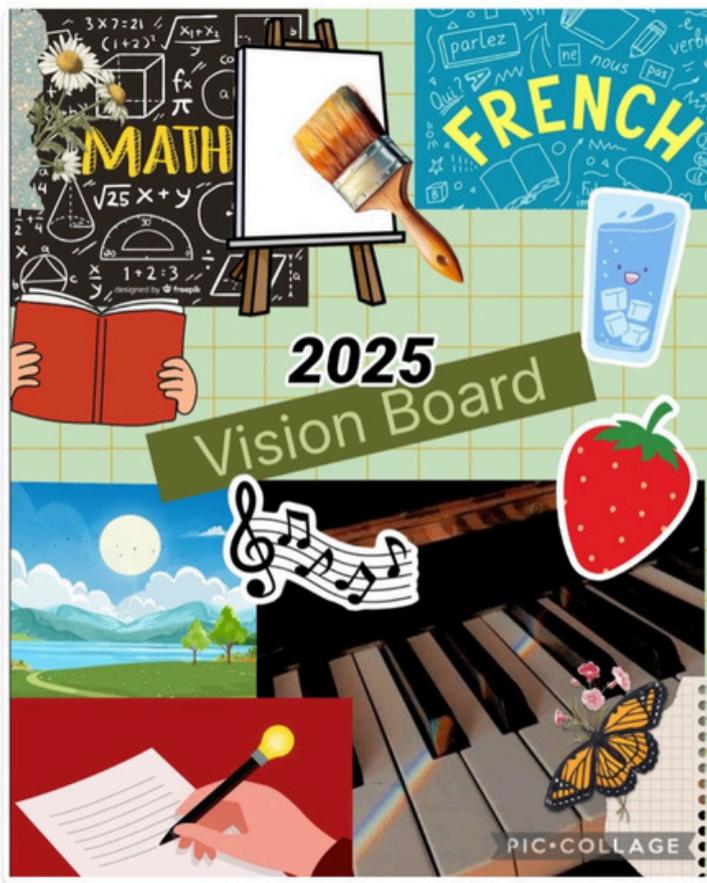
6th year Chemistry students began studying Organic Chemistry which accounts for 40% of their final written exam.



STUDENT ENRICHMENT

Student Enrichment - Kayleigh Murray:

5th year SE students kicked off the year, goal setting by creating vision boards for what they aim to achieve in 5th year and/or in their long term futures. They then began a module called 'Values' in which students explored what values are, how they develop and how our values shape our decision making strategies. Students debated ethical dilemmas in a respectful manner and learned about 'Cognitive Bias' and its effects on the decisions we make by watching videos, reading articles and answering comprehension-style and higher order thinking questions. Senior Cycle Key Competencies like 'managing learning and self', 'communicating' and 'cultivating wellbeing' were displayed.



5th year SE students worked on setting goals they aim to achieve in 5th year.



BIOLOGY

Biology - Ciara Campbell:

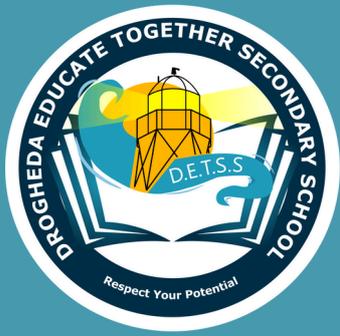
Our 6th Year Biology students have been tackling the challenging but fascinating topic of Genetics — exploring everything from variation and evolution to protein synthesis, genetic engineering and genetic crosses.

To bring biology to life through real-world learning, the class also welcomed a special guest: Neil Doyle, one of our own Drogheda ETSS teachers and a certified beekeeper. Neil shared his expertise on the life cycle of bees, their crucial role in food production and ecosystems, and the importance of sustainability in protecting these vital pollinators. Students got the chance to see real beekeeping equipment, try on protective gear, and even taste honey produced by Neil's own bees!

It was a truly engaging and memorable lesson, connecting classroom learning to real-world biology and showing how topics like ecology and genetics are intertwined in everyday life.



Students fully engaged in a talk on the importance of bees in terms of Ecology, Food Production Genetics and Sustainability.



MATHS

Maths - Ciara Campbell:

Our 3rd Year Maths students are currently working on their Classroom-Based Assessment 2 (CBA2), which focuses on conducting a statistical investigation.

Students have been busy over the last two weeks, designing and carrying out their own projects, exploring topics that genuinely interest them — for example, does height correlate with how far a person can jump from a stationary position? and what is the ratio of genders of students in Technology?

Throughout this process, students are developing a wide range of mathematical and statistical skills, including data collection, interpretation, graphing, and analysis. They are also applying key problem-solving and critical thinking skills as they design fair tests, draw meaningful conclusions, and reflect on their results.

The level of effort, creativity, and independence shown so far has been exceptional. Many students have gone above and beyond in their investigations, showing real curiosity and enthusiasm for uncovering patterns and relationships in the data they've gathered. The classroom has been filled with discussion, collaboration, and mathematical reasoning as students connect their work to real-life contexts.



Students using their statistical skills - data collection, interpretation, graphing and analysis for CBA 2.



SCIENCE

Science - Ciara Campbell:

Our 3rd Year Science students have had a busy first term, exploring the topics of Genetics, Evolution, Sexual Reproduction, and the Circulatory System.

To strengthen their understanding and develop key scientific and modelling skills, students completed a creative hands-on activity where they designed a model of the menstrual cycle. Using different coloured beads to represent the various phases of the cycle, they created a bracelet model that visually demonstrates hormonal changes throughout the month.

Their study of the circulatory system also involved a range of practical and creative tasks, including a heart dissection, a pulse rate investigation, and the design of a comic strip following the journey of red blood cells as they deliver oxygen around the body. These activities encouraged students to link structure and function in living organisms while building key scientific enquiry skills.

Students were enthusiastic, collaborative, and highly engaged, demonstrating curiosity and creativity while applying their scientific knowledge in meaningful, hands-on ways.



Students engaging in model making skills - a key skill in JC Science that will prepare them for LC Sciences.



SCIENCE

Science - Kayleigh Murray:

From all things Space to DNA and Genetics - 3rd Year science students have had a busy term! Students carried out guided, independent research on some of the hazards that affect astronauts exploring space. They recorded their findings and then collaboratively displayed them on a poster. The lab coats came out for an exciting sheep's heart dissection in which students identified main parts of the heart. Students also got creative and wrote excellent short stories entitled: "A Day in the Life of a Red Blood Cell!". Students also learned about DNA structure and how genes are passed along generations controlling various traits - they even explored their own family's traits by drawing Pedigree Charts!



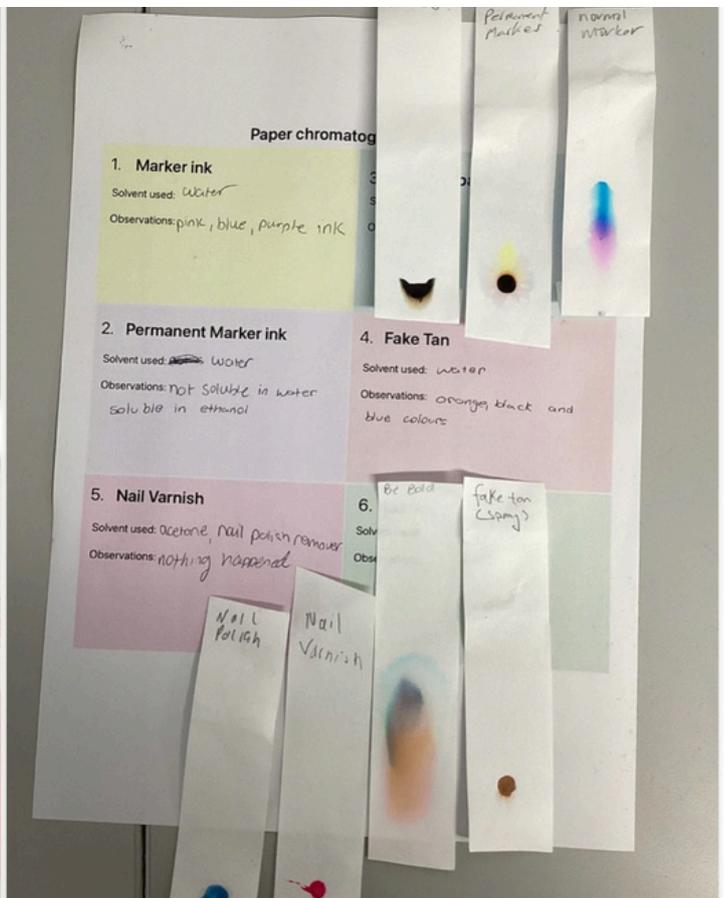
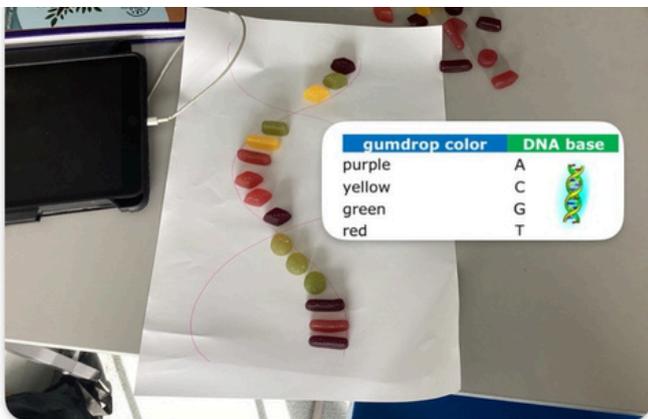
3rd year students performed a heart dissection as part of their studies of The Circulatory System.



FORENSIC SCIENCE

Forensic Science - Kayleigh Murray:

TY students who completed their Forensics module this term had to put their critical thinking caps on as they completed numerous Murder Mysteries, learned how to write in morse code and completed several 'Spot the Difference' challenges. On a more practical side, students displayed teamwork skills as they built a model of DNA given specific instructions to follow, recalling on JC knowledge of DNA base pairs. Students also learned about the forensics technique of Gel Electrophoresis. The lipstick came out as they explored Cheiloscopy (study of lip prints) and they also investigated the chemical makeup of lipstick further using Paper Chromatography - another forensic technique. As well as lipstick they investigated fake tan, ink and nail varnish, altering solvents accordingly!



TY students completed their Forensic Science module and displayed lots of key skills - model building, practical skills, teamwork skills.



MUSIC

First Year Music Taster - Breigin Baccolini:

First Year Music students completed their music taster and developed their listening and performing through class band. Thanks to all students who brought their A game and led the singing and playing. We definitely have a talented bunch of musicians in 1st year! Our first lesson post-tasters took us to the spooky world of skeletons and ghosts, with imaginatively named orchestral piece Danse Macabre. We are fortunate to have 1:1 iPad devices, where students can compose freely using Garageband software. We are looking forward to hearing how students have incorporated ideas from Danse Macabre in their own compositions.



Spooky Sounds in 2nd Year Music! - Megan Monerawela:

In the spirit of Halloween, our 2nd Year Music students have been busy composing their very own spooky-themed songs! Drawing inspiration from eerie film scores, ghostly artwork, and haunting poems, students experimented with minor keys, chromatic notes, and dramatic dynamics to create spine-chilling soundscapes. They combined their creativity with their understanding of melody, rhythm, and texture to bring their Halloween ideas to life. Well done to all our young composers for embracing the Halloween spirit and showing such imagination in their music-making this term.



MUSIC

Third Year Triads - Sinéad Curran:

Our Third Year students have been busy discovering how chords are built! Many of our students have heard or played chords for years, but only now questioning and understanding how they are built. We have been building these chords using Major and Minor Triads and identifying whether they sound major, minor or diminished.

Our Third Years have also been actively practicing for their Junior Cycle Practical exam. They are showing great progression, commitment and confidence in their chosen pieces!



3rd Year Practical Rehearsal!

Fifth Year Music - Sinéad Curran & Breigin Baccolini:

Fifth year music students have been working hard on developing their melody writing skills and have mastered the art of the 8 bar melody with great success. The 16 bar melody is our next challenge. We have used our knowledge of melody writing to help us understand our first of four set works - Mozart. Mozart was a master of writing 8 bars melodies, and we hope to steal some ideas from him!



MUSIC

Sixth Year Music - Megan Monerawela:

Our Sixth Year students have been studying Seachanges (with Danse Macabre) by Irish composer Raymond Deane this term. They explored the piece's fascinating textures, use of contrast, and eerie atmosphere while deepening their understanding of minor harmonies and their expressive power. The students have shown great insight in analysing how Deane combines traditional and modern techniques to create such an expressive sound world.

Teach Solais - Sinéad Curran & Breigin Baccolini:

Teach Solais students used Garageband to create and build chords on the keyboard. They chose the correct chords for the song 'Monster Mash' and selected a spooky effect to give it a halloween feel. We played along to the song itself and continued by recording it!



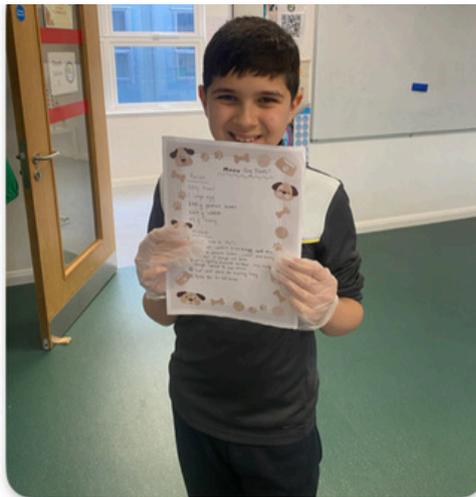
Teach Solais students using Garageband to create and build chords in order to perform the Monster Mash.



TEACH SOLAIS

Caring for Animals - Kayleigh Murray:

Our students in Teach Solais 2 have completed fabulous work in their 'Caring for Animals' Short Course this term. This course places emphasis on the dog as a pet. So far students have learned about different breeds of dogs, the benefits of owning a dog as a pet and how to care for a dog in terms of food, exercise and shelter. Students practised numeracy skills surveying teachers in the school on what type of/how many pets they owned, displaying their findings on a Bar Chart. Students even baked delicious dog treats and gave them to teachers who owned dogs - they were so popular, we may need to make them again!



Teash Solais students learned essential skills around pet ownership and care.



TEACH SOLAIS

Tutor Overview - Fiona Radford:

We have gotten off to a very productive and busy term in Teach Solais. Some of us are now in Transition Year and really enjoying all our trips and activities. Our Third Year students are busy with CBAs and working towards their mock exams in February. Second Year Teach Solais students have been also busy, especially in the Home Ec kitchen where they've been perfecting our cooking skills!



Teach Solais students perfecting their cooking skills.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

PE - KellyAnn Buchanan:

First year students have been learning about Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) this term. They were putting their knowledge into practise in different sports such as football, dodgeball, Olympic handball and basketball. The TY students have also joined in practising their FMS.



Students learning and practicing Fundamental Movement Skills in Physical Education.



GEOGRAPHY

Geography - Fiona Radford:

Our 6th year Geography classes headed down to Glendalough in early September to carry out their Geographical Investigation, which is worth 20% of their final leaving Certificate result. On what turned out to be a very wet day, our students braved the elements to investigate how erosion impacts the V-Shaped valley of the Lugduff River. We conducted a bedload analysis, measured the velocity of the river and calculated the cross section and valley profile, using equipment such as vernier callipers, clinometer, ranging poles and transect tapes. We had a very successful and fun day despite the rain!



6th year students using key skills and carrying out their Geographical Investigation, worth 20% of their final grade!



SNA INSIGHT

SNA Insight - Caroline Whelan:

The first six weeks of term have flown by, and it's been a really positive start to the year. Our SNA team has been busy helping students settle back into school life, supporting them as they build confidence and find their rhythm in new classes and routines. A big focus has been on encouraging independence and creating supportive spaces where every student can feel comfortable and ready to learn. It's been lovely to see students growing in confidence and forming strong connections with their teachers and peers, particularly our new first years. We're looking forward to continuing this good momentum over the next few weeks and working together to make sure every student feels included, supported, and set up for success. Here's to a great school year at Drogheda ETSS



SNA Caroline assisting students in Teach Solais with their classwork.



GUIDANCE

Guidance - Hilda Bailey:

During the first term, Senior Cycle Guidance placed a strong emphasis on goal setting, target setting, and the development of effective study habits. In particular, 6th Year students began receiving structured guidance on the procedures and options available for their progression pathways after secondary school.

As part of this focus, Study Skills Workshops were delivered to both 5th and 6th Year students by Super Generation, a team of experts in student learning and motivation. These workshops aimed to equip students with practical tools for managing their time, improving concentration, and preparing effectively for exams. 3rd Year students will receive their workshop after the midterm break.

On Wednesday, 22nd October, the school also hosted two evening events for parents/guardians:

- A Study Skills Workshop for parents/guardians of 3rd, 5th, and 6th Year students, also facilitated by Super Generation, which focused on how parents can support effective study routines at home.
- A Progression Pathways & Supports Information Session for 6th Year parents/guardians, delivered by Guidance Counsellor Hilda, covering CAO, PLCs, apprenticeships, the HEAR and DARE schemes, and the SUSI Grant.

These events were organised by Jason, Senior Cycle Progress Leader, and Hilda, Guidance Counsellor, as part of a coordinated effort to support students and families in preparing for both exams and life beyond school.





LCA

Tutor - Stephen Jones:

It has been a busy and exciting start to the year for our LCA students! They have been working hard on their Key Assignments and have also begun planning for their General Education Task.

In Science, they explored biology by preparing cells to be viewed under a microscope and even designed their own honeycomb structures from scratch. For their most recent topic, students worked on Organ Systems of the Human Body - their function, structure and interactions between systems and modelling these systems by creating a life sized version of the human body.

Language and culture have been a focus in Spanish, where students have been practicing conversational skills and enjoyed sampling authentic tapas. Over in Hotel & Catering, there has been plenty of activity in the kitchen with students baking delicious treats—including lemon drizzle cake, Oreo protein balls, scones and cookies—for our Parent/Guardian Morning, as well as learning to cook savoury dishes such as Cajun pasta.

In Office Administration & Customer Care, students have been role-playing real-life scenarios such as dealing with customer complaints, while in Vocational Preparation, they have been investigating different jobs and studying job advertisements to help with future planning.

The year is off to a fantastic start!



5th year LCA students modelling their knowledge of the human body and organ systems.



FRENCH

French - Brendan Cluskey

Students have been kept very busy this term with their Language Portfolio projects.

1st Year:

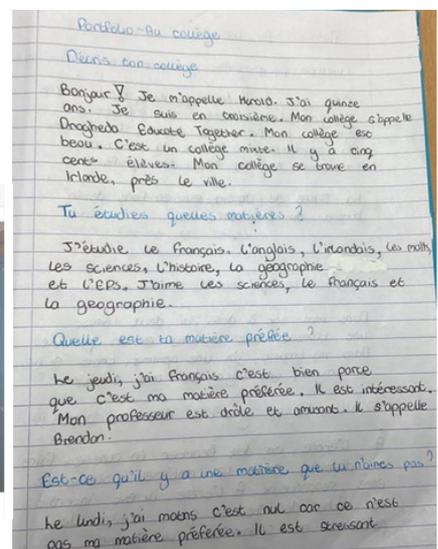
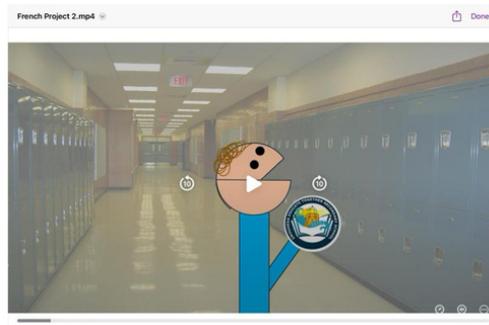
Students created a digital blog post in which they introduce themselves and include an audio recording to practice pronunciation. They also gave a digital guided tour of a classroom, naming as many objects as they can!

2nd Year:

Students described and gave their opinions on various different outfits of their choice using the Clips app after preparing scripts in their notes copies and then presenting this orally. They were also busy creating projects describing their daily routine and a typical day in their life. Various forms of digital media were used to complete this project!

3rd Year:

Students started off the year by producing a Role Play at the doctor's office. They prepared a script and then produced this orally using the Clips app. Students created some impressively lengthy projects in which they describe their school and their everyday school lives. This was first done as a written project, then students did a fantastic job transforming these into digital project submissions using various apps and resources on the iPads!



Student work in French on their Language Portfolio projects.